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Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing | April 17, 20...

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REMARKS

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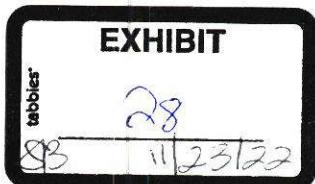
— HEALTHCARE

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James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

6:22 P.M. EDT



THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much. I just had a great conversation with the leading faith leaders of our country. It went extremely well. We learned a lot. I learned a lot. And we're working on some things that are very interesting and very positive. I thank them all for being on the call.

And yesterday, we unveiled detailed guidelines for America's governors to initiate a phased, safe, and gradual reopening of America. That's what's happening. The guidelines provide governors with the fact-driven and science-based metrics they will need to make the decisions that are right for their own particular state.

To view the guidelines, you can go to the website at Whitehouse.gov/OpeningAmerica. So that's Whitehouse.gov/OpeningAmerica.

Treasury has sent out economic relief payments to more than 80 million Americans who have their direct deposit information on file with the IRS. And an incredible success it has been. If you have

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farm. I want to see what's happening with China. I want to see how they're doing on it: Are they fulfilling the deal, the transaction?

We have a lot of discussions going on with China. Let me just put it this way: I'm not happy, okay? I'm not happy. And I spoke to them. And this could have been shut down a long time ago. They knew it. And we couldn't get in. And, in all fairness, World Health couldn't get in, and that's why I wish they took a different stance. They took a very pathetic stance and a very weak stance. But they say they couldn't get in.

But, ultimately, they got in; they got in much sooner than anybody, but they didn't report what was happening. They didn't report what was happening inside of China. No, I'm not happy with China.

Yeah, please.

Q Mr. President, I wanted to ask Dr. Fauci: Could you address these suggestions or concerns that this virus was somehow manmade, possibly came out of a laboratory in China?

THE PRESIDENT: Want to go?

Q You studied this virus. What are the prospects of that?

DR. FAUCI: There was a study recently that we can make available to you, where a group of highly qualified evolutionary virologists looked at the sequences there and the sequences in bats as they evolve. And the mutations that it took to get to the point where it is now is totally consistent with a jump of a species from an animal to a human.

So, I mean, the paper will be available — I don't have the authors right now, but we can make that available to you.

Q Just one follow-up, sir, on the protest that you — that we've seen of people wanting the economies open. Does that concern you though, as a health expert, when you see folks congregate? And are you worried if that's encouraged?

DR. FAUCI: Well, I mean, I'm looking at it from a public health standpoint. I certainly could understand the frustration of people, but my main role in the task force is to make

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recommendations to protect the health and the safety of the American people. And I would hope that people understand that that's the reason why we're doing what we're doing, and hopefully we'll put an end to this.

THE PRESIDENT: And I will say this: I'm very, very satisfied with the decision we made, listening to experts, listening to my gut, the feeling of the Vice President, and really many others. When we put it all together, I'm very — look, if we didn't do what we did at the time, we could have lost more than 2 million people. I really believe that.

I could show you charts of other places that gave it a shot and they're not doing well. And I would show it to you right now; I don't want to embarrass anybody. But they gave that a shot. It's an automatic. I mean, everybody would say, "Let's do that" — until they sit down and start thinking. And we could have lost more than 2 million people. We could have lost more than 2 million. It could have been much more than that, by the way. We have one that says from 1.6 to 2.2, but it could have really been more than that. But I looked at one in particular — one country in particular that is using the herd mentality, and not working out very well.

Now, with all of that being said, we have to get back to work. We've — we'll be crossing lines very soon, in many cases. In some cases, we're well on the way down. In other cases, we're right at the top and heading down. We're heading in the right direction.

I saw some numbers from New Jersey, which was having a very tough time. It started — he's — he's doing a terrific job, the governor — Phil — Phil Murphy. Starting to get some really good signs.

I looked at some of the New York numbers. They're starting to get — they've been devastated, obviously, but some really good things are starting to happen.

So, if we would have done something different — first of all, it would have — it would not have been sustainable. You would have had people — they would have been furious at you and me and everybody up here. They — it would not have been sustainable. Because you look at some of the hospitals — as an example, a certain hospital right near where I grew up in Queens — and you had body bags all over the floor of that hospital. You know the one I'm talking about. All over the floor of the hospital.